



**United States Attorney's Office**  
*Southern District of New York*

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**FORMER HONDURAN CONGRESSMAN AND BROTHER OF THE  
CURRENT PRESIDENT OF HONDURAS CHARGED WITH  
CONSPIRING TO IMPORT COCAINE INTO THE UNITED STATES AND  
RELATED FIREARMS OFFENSES**

*Juan Antonio Hernandez Alvarado, a/k/a "Tony Hernandez," Also Faces Charge for Lying to  
Federal Agents*

Geoffrey S. Berman, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and Raymond Donovan, the Special Agent in Charge of the Special Operations Division of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), announced today that former Honduran congressman Juan Antonio Hernandez Alvarado, a/k/a "Tony Hernandez," ("HERNANDEZ") was charged in Manhattan federal court with conspiring to import cocaine into the United States, related weapons offenses involving the use and possession of machineguns and destructive devices, and making false statements to federal agents. HERNANDEZ is the brother of the current president of Honduras, Juan Orlando Hernandez. The case is assigned to U.S. District Judge P. Kevin Castel. HERNANDEZ was arrested on November 23, 2018, in Miami, Florida, and will appear this afternoon in Miami federal court before United States Magistrate Judge Jonathan Goodman.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman said: "As alleged, former Honduran congressman Tony Hernandez was involved in all stages of the trafficking through Honduras of multi-ton loads of cocaine that were destined for the U.S. Hernandez allegedly arranged machinegun-toting security for cocaine shipments, bribed law enforcement officials for sensitive information to protect drug shipments, and solicited large bribes from major drug traffickers. Thanks to the ongoing work of the DEA, Hernandez is now in custody on U.S. soil and facing justice in the U.S. courts."

Special Agent in Charge Raymond Donovan said: "Drug trafficking and corruption around the world threatens the rule of law, fuels violence and instability, and harms innocent

families and communities. Hernandez and his criminal associates allegedly conspired with some of the world's most deadly and dangerous transnational criminal networks in Mexico and Colombia to flood American streets with deadly drugs. DEA looks forward to Hernandez facing American justice and answering for his alleged crimes.”

As alleged in the Superseding Indictment unsealed in federal court:<sup>[1]</sup>

From at least in or about 2004, up to and including in or about 2016, multiple drug-trafficking organizations in Honduras and elsewhere worked together, and with support from certain prominent public and private individuals, including Honduran politicians and law enforcement officials, to receive multi-ton loads of cocaine sent to Honduras from, among other places, Colombia via air and maritime routes, and to transport the drugs westward in Honduras toward the border with Guatemala and eventually to the United States. For protection from official interference, and in order to facilitate the safe passage through Honduras of multi-hundred-kilogram loads of cocaine, drug traffickers paid bribes to public officials, including certain members of the National Congress of Honduras.

HERNANDEZ is a former member of the National Congress of Honduras, the brother of the current president of Honduras, and a large-scale drug trafficker who worked with other drug traffickers in, among other places, Colombia, Honduras, and Mexico, to import cocaine into the United States. From at least in or about 2004, up to and including in or about 2016, HERNANDEZ was involved in processing, receiving, transporting, and distributing multi-ton loads of cocaine that arrived in Honduras via planes, go-fast vessels, and, on at least one occasion, a submarine. HERNANDEZ had access to cocaine laboratories in Honduras and Colombia, at which some of the cocaine was stamped with the symbol “TH,” *i.e.*, “Tony Hernandez.” HERNANDEZ also coordinated and, at times, participated in providing heavily armed security for cocaine shipments transported within Honduras, including by members of the Honduran National Police and drug traffickers armed with, among other weapons, machineguns.

As part of his drug-trafficking activities, HERNANDEZ and his co-conspirators bribed law enforcement officials for sensitive information to protect drug shipments and solicited large bribes from major drug traffickers for HERNANDEZ.

In or about February 2014 in Honduras, HERNANDEZ met with Devis Leonel Rivera Maradiaga, the former leader of a violent Honduran drug-trafficking organization known as the *Cachiros*, for a meeting arranged by, among others, a former member of the Honduran National Police. During a video- and audio-recorded portion of that meeting, HERNANDEZ agreed to help Rivera Maradiaga by causing Honduran government entities to pay money owed to one or more *Cachiros* money-laundering front companies in exchange for kickback payments from Rivera Maradiaga. Rivera Maradiaga paid HERNANDEZ approximately \$50,000 during the meeting.

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<sup>[1]</sup> As the introductory phrase signifies, the entirety of the text of the Superseding Indictment and the description of the Superseding Indictment set forth herein, constitute only allegations, and every fact described should be treated as an allegation.

The Superseding Indictment charges HERNANDEZ, 40, with four counts: (1) conspiring to import cocaine into the United States, (2) using and carrying machine guns and destructive devices during, and possessing machine guns and destructive devices in furtherance of, the cocaine-importation conspiracy, (3) conspiring to use and carry machine guns and destructive devices during, and to possess machine guns and destructive devices in furtherance of, the cocaine-importation conspiracy, and (4) making false statements to federal agents. If convicted, HERNANDEZ faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison and a maximum term of life in prison on Count One, a mandatory minimum sentence of 30 years in prison and a maximum term of life in prison on Count Two, a maximum term of life in prison on Count Three, and a maximum term of five years in prison on Count Four. The potential mandatory minimum and maximum sentences in this case are prescribed by Congress and provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the judge.

Mr. Berman praised the outstanding efforts of the DEA's Special Operations Division Bilateral Investigations Unit, New York Strike Force, and Tegucigalpa Country Office, as well as the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs.

This case is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Emil J. Bove III and Mathew J. Laroche are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Superseding Indictment are merely allegations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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